

# **Environmental Due Diligence**

Caltrain Communication Tower Delmas

City of San José

**Prepared For:**



Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board

**Prepared By:**



ICF International

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## Introduction

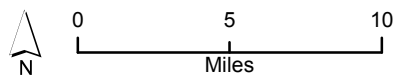
The Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB) provides rail commuter services (Caltrain) through the counties of San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara. JPB has developed this environmental document in support of an environmental due diligence for its communication system implementation. The information included in this document provides an environmental review of elements of potential impact.

## Project Description

The JPB communication system was dependent on commercial telephones lines provided by AT&T and other third parties. In 2002, a major AT&T failure created massive delays to Caltrain operations and passengers. In subsequent years, additional outages took place resulting in similar impacts to Caltrain's signal control systems. To remediate this problem, JPB engaged in a comprehensive design and installation program of its own Advanced Train Control System (ATCS), a wireless system to remove dependency from third party providers.

JPB designed and installed its ATCS wireless network for 31 Control Points (CPs). Project implementation included antennae and cabling at two Mountain Tops (MTs) at leased antenna sites, radio equipment, tilt-down towers (60 feet or 80 feet) complete with foundations, antennas, and cables. Additionally, JPB improved its ATCS signal data communication link reliability and performance, with increased capacity and better balance of the traffic load between the two ATCS channels. The JPB ATCS network removed JPB's dependency on AT&T and improved reliability of its communication network, minimizing delays resulting from communication failures.

The specific project discussed in this document is the construction of CP Delmas at Mile Post (MP) 48.5 in the City of San José (see Figure 1, Regional Location). The project is located adjacent to train tracks near the intersection of Asbury Street and Chestnut Street, within an area that includes a vacant lot as well as predominately industrial and residential uses (See Figure 2, Project Location). The project is located on Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 259-09-049 and is within the Caltrain right-of-way. The approximately 68-foot ATCS tower, an omnidirectional antenna, was constructed in 2009. The footprint of the tower base is approximately 13 square feet (sf). The tower operates during normal operating hours transmitting signals to trains and tracks along the corridor.



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Source: Basemap, Microsoft Bing 2015

**Figure 2**  
**Project Location**

## Elements of Potential Impact

A discussion of potential impacts is provided under each of the resource areas below.

### a) Aesthetics/Visual

The project consisted of the installation of a 68-foot communication tower with an approximate footprint of 13 sf. There are no lights installed on the tower. The vicinity of the project includes a vacant lot as well as predominately industrial and residential uses. The immediate vicinity of the project is utilitarian in nature and consists of other communication equipment and utility poles. The train tracks extend to the east and west of the project.

Sensitive viewers typically include nearby residents and recreational users. The closest residence is a single-family home located approximately 0.1 mile north of the project on Chestnut Street. The closest park to the project is Columbus Park, which is located approximately 0.5 mile north of the project. Additionally, the Guadalupe Gardens, part of Guadalupe River Park, are located approximately 0.3 mile east of the project. Guadalupe Community Garden is also located approximately 0.2 mile northeast of the project. There are no open spaces located in the vicinity of the project. There are no Officially Designated State Scenic Highways in the vicinity of the project.<sup>1</sup> As such, the project is consistent with the existing utilitarian visual character in the area. The view of the tower from the closest residence is partially obstructed by an industrial building located southwest of the residence. The tower is not visible from Columbus Park, the Guadalupe Gardens, or Guadalupe Community Garden due to intervening structures.

The project is similar in appearance to the other communication equipment and utility poles in the vicinity of the project. Additionally, the tower is slender and, in general, does not obstruct any scenic views. Furthermore, the project did not result in any additional sources of light or glare. Therefore, the project did not result in adverse impacts related to aesthetics or visual quality.

### b) Agricultural Resources

The project is located within a highly urbanized area that is not used for agricultural purposes. Therefore, the project had no impacts to agricultural resources.

### c) Air Quality

The project involved the installation of a tower comprised of prefabricated materials. Due to the nature of the project (the installation of a tower), the project did not involve substantial excavation, grading activity, or additional vehicle trips outside of normal operations. As such, the project required minimal air quality-degrading construction activities and a relatively short construction period. Therefore, the project did not result in adverse impacts related to air quality.

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<sup>1</sup> Caltrans, California Scenic Highway Mapping System. Santa Clara County. Available: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/index.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/index.htm). Accessed: August 3, 2015.

## **d) Biological Resources**

The vicinity of the project is urban and built out. The project is surrounded by gravel, trees, and minimal vegetation. There are no biological resources in the immediate vicinity of the project.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the project had no impacts to biological resources.

## **e) Cultural Resources**

There are no known archaeological resources on or near the track within 1,000 feet of the project.<sup>3</sup> The vicinity of the tower consists of previously disturbed soil, which limited the potential for disturbance of below ground cultural resources (e.g., human remains) or other paleontological resources. The closest known historical resource on or near the track is the San José/Cahill Station (Diridon) near MP 47.50 in the City of San José, which is approximately 0.9 mile northwest of the project. The San José/Cahill Station was constructed in 1935 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources.<sup>4</sup> However, due to the distance between the tower and the San José/Cahill Station, the project did not affect this historic resource. Therefore, the project did not result in adverse impacts related to cultural or historical resources.

## **f) Geology and Soils**

Due to the nature of the project (the installation of a tower), which did not include any habitable structures and required minimal excavation and no grading, the project had no impacts to geological hazards or soil instability.

## **g) Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

A voluntary cleanup site, the Chestnut Street Project (60000431) is located adjacent to the project.<sup>5</sup> Previous investigations found volatile organic compounds in the soil and groundwater, and some metals and petroleum hydrocarbons in the soil. The site was previously used for chemical distribution, railroad right-of-way, warehousing, and vehicle maintenance, which caused the contamination. However, the project is not listed on the California Department of Toxic Substances Control List of Hazardous Waste & Substances Sites. The installation of the tower did not produce any toxic substances, nor did it unearth or expose any hazardous materials. Additionally, the

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<sup>2</sup> ICF. Review of aerial imagery for the vicinity of the project. October 7, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board. 2014. Final Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project Environmental Impact Report. December.

<sup>4</sup> Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board. 2014. Final Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project Environmental Impact Report. December.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Toxic Substances Control. 2015. EnviroStor. Available: [http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/mapfull.asp?global\\_id=&x=-119&y=37&z=18&ms=640,480&mt=m&findaddress=True&city=asbury%20street%20and%20chestnut%20street,%20san%20jose&zip=&county=&federal\\_superfund=true&state\\_response=true&voluntary\\_cleanup=true&school\\_cleanup=true&ca\\_site=true&tiered\\_permit=true&evaluation=true&military\\_evaluation=true&school\\_investigation=true&operating=true&post\\_closure=true&non\\_operating=true](http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/mapfull.asp?global_id=&x=-119&y=37&z=18&ms=640,480&mt=m&findaddress=True&city=asbury%20street%20and%20chestnut%20street,%20san%20jose&zip=&county=&federal_superfund=true&state_response=true&voluntary_cleanup=true&school_cleanup=true&ca_site=true&tiered_permit=true&evaluation=true&military_evaluation=true&school_investigation=true&operating=true&post_closure=true&non_operating=true). Accessed: July 28, 2015.

installation of the tower did not involve the routine use and transport of hazardous materials. Therefore, the project did not result in adverse impacts related to hazardous materials.

## **h) Hydrology and Water Quality**

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Map, the project is not located within a 100-year floodplain.<sup>6</sup> Due to the nature of the project (the installation of a tower), which did not change the amount of impervious surface area and did not contribute additional stormwater runoff or contribute to stormwater pollution, the project did not result in adverse impacts related to hydrology and water quality. Additionally, the project did not place a habitable structure within a floodplain, nor did it redirect flood flows.

## **i) Land Use and Planning**

The project and adjacent parcels (the tracks) are zoned as Heavy Industrial, whereas the vicinity of the project is mainly zoned as Light Industrial.<sup>7</sup> The vicinity of the project includes primarily industrial and residential uses as well as transit- and transportation-oriented uses and, thus, the project is compatible with surrounding uses. Therefore, the project did not result in adverse impacts related to land use and planning.

## **j) Mineral Resources**

There are no mineral resource sites in the vicinity of the project.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the project had no impacts to mineral resources.

## **k) Noise**

Due to the nature of the project (the installation of a tower), no noise or vibration is generated by the project. There is a single-family home located approximately 0.1 mile north of the project. Given the temporary nature of construction activities and the minor need for heavy construction equipment, no substantial construction noise was generated during the installation of the tower. Therefore, the project did not result in any long-term adverse impacts related to noise.

## **l) Population and Housing**

No acquisitions or relocations occurred as a result of the project. Therefore, the project did not result in adverse impacts related to population and housing.

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<sup>6</sup> Federal Emergency Management Agency. 2015. Flood Insurance Rate Map, Map Number 06081C0169F. Revised October 2, 2015. Available: <https://msc.fema.gov/portal>. Accessed: October 6, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> City of San José. 2015. Land Use Zoning. Available: <http://csj-landzoning.appspot.com/index.html>. Accessed: July 28, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> City of San José. 2011. Envision San José 2040 General Plan. Available: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/474>. November. Accessed: July 28, 2015.



### **m) Public Services and Recreation**

The project did not result in an increase in population. As such, the project did not include uses that required additional police services, fire services, or recreational facilities. Therefore, the project did not result in adverse impacts related to public services.

### **n) Transportation/Traffic**

It is estimated that a signal maintainer or radio technician visits the tower two times per year for regular inspections and as needed to troubleshoot equipment issues. Due to the nature of the project (the installation of a tower), the project did not result in the generation of a substantial amount of additional traffic. Therefore, the project did not result in adverse impacts related to transportation or traffic.

### **o) Utilities and Service Systems**

Due to the nature of the project (the installation of a tower), the project did not result in a substantial demand for utilities (e.g., water, electricity, natural gas) or generation of utilities or (e.g., wastewater and solid waste). Therefore, the project did not result in adverse impacts related to utilities and service systems.

## **NEPA Categorical Exclusion**

Given the discussion above, the project qualifies for a NEPA Categorical Exclusion (CE) in accordance with 47 CFR 1.1306. This regulation pertains to actions which are categorically excluded from environmental processing. The project meets this criteria because it involves minor modifications of existing or authorized facilities or equipment and does not involve a site specified under §1.1307(a) (1)-(7), involve high intensity light under §1.1307(a)(8), or result in human exposure to radio frequency radiation in excess of the applicable safety standards specified in §1.1307(b).